

If you follow the Farmer's Almanac, it says that Jackson is supposed to have a cold August and a warm September. What do you think so far? Whether we have an "Indian Summer" or not, September is a time of transition. School activities are in full force, the days are growing shorter, and whether we like it or not, the shifting from outdoor to indoor activities is upon us. How does one make the transition between reducing outdoor time with ski preparation nearing? How does one stay 'in shape' or 'fit' during this transition before beginning a ski preparatory conditioning program?

Everyone has his or her own ways of preparing for the abrupt end of summer. In my time living here, I have met those who live here mostly for the outdoor beauty, for the community or for the outdoor recreational pleasure that abounds us. Many people try to marry 'being' outdoors with their exercise routine. Why wouldn't we? After all we live here in the valley of recreation! This works to a certain degree, but never lasts forever and when the time comes to move inside - due to weather or shorter days, this is not always welcomed.

The body needs more of a challenge or a change in movement, not just longer time on a bike or an increase in the frequency of a hike. Despite what most may think, this is not considered exercise; it is considered recreational movement in which the body adapts. This is not to say, that if you are training for a specific event, you do not become better and more conditioned in that event. In terms of overall conditioning and working on the weak components of the body, that may have been over-looked during the summer, the body needs much more than repetitive endurance movements, in the same plane for countless hours on end.

However, a person is not going to stay inside and miss a beautiful day just because I said so! Or another person may not like being indoors to workout anyway. I will be the first to tell you, "me either!" I am sitting here right now writing this article inside, gritting my teeth while it is currently beautiful outside. And when this time of year rolls around, you never know how long the nice weather is going to last!

The dilemma is getting the appropriate exercise to be 'in shape' and enjoying the remaining days of good weather while it lasts. How does one improve in the weak areas that he or she never worked on during the summer while getting to be outside. Hopefully, I may be able to provide some simple examples on how to help you.

Practice D.A.M.P. before EVERY outdoor activity or exercise bout. D.A.M.P. stands for *dynamic activation movement prep*. This turns 'on' the appropriate muscles in preparation for the activity you are about to embark upon. Do not confuse this with static stretching. Static stretching is great AFTER a workout or activity, but not BEFORE. When you static stretch (holding a position for more than 20 seconds), you fatigue those muscles being stretched and research has shown static stretching before activity reduces power production. Please, do not mistake this article... *static stretching before activity reduces power production... stretching after activity increases flexibility (elongation)*.

Here is an example - without having to place your hands on the ground. *Standing Scorpions* - stand with arms out to side in a T and reach one flexed foot back and behind body (like a scorpion whipping its tail), without moving the upper body too forward or moving the hands/arms. Another example is the *Cross Squat* - stand and step one foot in front of the other and squat down (be sure to squat with knees not beyond your toes - sit stance).

And lastly, the most important exercise component that people religiously ignore is STRETCHING. Experience has associated most lower back problems, knee tenderness or pain, hamstring pulls and hip discomfort to a lack of stretching. I would bet that even if you paid someone to stretch after an activity he/she would have difficulty doing it. I think it might have to do with our fast paced, rushed way of living! This is where static stretching becomes a great asset to your body and it's future - helping your body continue to perform for many years to come pain free.

STRETCH while reading or watching the boob tube. Sit with your legs spread as wide as they will go with a flat back and lean forward - you remember old physical education stretching from when you were a kid. Conversely, cross a foot over a bent knee while sitting yoga style to stretch the hips.

Frankly, if you want to continue to do what you love outdoors - for as long as you are able to breathe, *then start a stretching routine now!* Pick whatever static, dynamic or manual stretch you know. Many already know how to stretch and often this occurs naturally in the morning when he or she gets up out bed. But, you can expound on this! Watch

your dog or cat and take a cue from them – they stretch all the time. It really only takes a few minutes - while you talk to your friends about where to grab a beer, wine or ‘bad for you’ dinner!

While enjoying the remaining days of nice weather, take a bit of time to treat your body right – practice D.A.M.P. & stretch before and after each exercise bout or outdoor activity so that you can keep going forever!